

Visit to Royal Army Medical Corps Museum

On 25th October 2011 Clive, Glenda and Ian visited the RAMC Museum at Keogh Barracks, Place Road, Mytchett, Surrey GU16 6DD <http://www.ams-museum.org.uk/museum/>

A Very Brave Man

The excuse for the visit was that Clive wanted to photograph the Victoria Cross awarded to Brigadier Henry Edward Manning Douglas, who was buried a Major-General, age 63, on the 17th February 1939 in Epsom Cemetery. His campaigns included the Second Boer War (1899-1902), where he won his VC, Somaliland (1903-04), Serbo-Turkish War (1912-13) and the First World War.



Brigadier Douglas



Victoria Cross



Major-General Douglas's medal display at the RAMC Museum

Henry Edward Manning Douglas was a brave man, as the photograph of his medals show (*medals photos courtesy Clive Gilbert*). They include the VC, DC, CMG, CB, DSO, QSA, 1914-15 Star, BWM, VM, 1911 Coronation Medal, 1937 Coronation Medal, plus the Croix de Guerre avec Palme (France), Order of Red Cross, Order of Samaritan and Order of St. Sava (Serbia).

The full story on HE Manning Douglas, and it is well worth reading, can be seen at:
<http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/DouglasHEM.html>

What's in the Skip?

Glenda went to the RAMC Museum find out more about Lt Col George Henry Thynne. OBE. His OBE had been discovered in a skip after a house clearance and was handed to Glenda by a friend. Glenda traced the Thynne's grandson and returned it to him. He and his mother didn't realise it had been thrown out and thought it was still in the attic.

George Thynne joined the RAMC as a private in 1919 in the Quartermaster Stores. He was commissioned in 1939 and ended his career as a Lt. Colonel. He won the Military OBE for his services to administration during the Emergency in Malaya in the 1950s.

Unfortunately, Glenda had little luck at discovering more about George Thynne at the RAMC (the curator was getting ready for an 'inspection' so had little time to spare), so the hunt continues for further information about his activities.

If you get captured, be sure to take care of your teeth

As for Ian, he went because he likes museums and he had not been to this one before. He learnt not to suffer from dental problems in POW camp; the displays of rudimentary dental equipment and examples of teeth repairs were cringe making.

Pat Lucas Retirement – We'll miss her

On Monday, 9th January 2012 volunteers were invited to a retirement reception for Pat Lucas, Assistant Library Manager at Ewell library. Pat, as you all know, was also the Ewell Library representative on the History Centre Committee.

But she was much more than a committee member. Pat is enthusiastic about local and family history and was a key member of the team whenever we planned any events, such as the *Memories of the Fifties* displays and *Open Day, Who Do You Think You Are?* Family History Days and our own AGMs, plus many other events too numerous to mention stretching back over the ten years that the centre has been open. She has been invaluable in liaising between Surrey Libraries and the History Centre volunteers and was ever willing to facilitate any requests from the History Centre to ensure we fitted in and worked effectively alongside the library staff.

Pat has worked for the library service for 25 years, joining SCC in 1986 as a Clerical Assistant at Library HQ in Dorking on a temporary 6 months contract. She then worked in many different roles in various locations before accepting the role of Assistant Library Manager in Ewell. In this role she has seen a number of significant changes in the library service, not least the introduction of self-service. She was also the Children's Champion and was as much a hands-on participant as a supervisor being passionate about encouraging young visitors to read and make use of the library services and facilities.



Picture courtesy Margaret Jones

Pat will be greatly missed by us all. We hope she has a wonderful retirement and may even find time to do some of her own family history research, when she takes breaks from her interest in gardening. We have yet to hear who will replace Pat as the Ewell library representative on the History Centre Committee.

Change of roles for Lesley Wyatt and Marion Saberi

Lesley Wyatt, who has been Surrey Libraries representative on our Committee and who co-ordinates the relationship with all seven History Centres in Surrey, has changed her role. She is now Library Sector Lead - Community Partnered Libraries with responsibility for activating the volunteer arrangements for Surrey Libraries, including, for example, Ewell Court, Stoneleigh and Tattenham. This means she has had to resign from the History Centre Committee. We thank Lesley for all her support over the past few years and wish her well in her new role.

Lesley's place on the committee will be taken by Marion Saberi, who we hope to meet at the committee meeting on the 23rd January. We look forward to welcoming her and working with her.

Another Satisfied Customer

Thanks to Hazel Ballan and Clive Gilbert

Hazel recently received the email, below, concerning Sergeant Walter Kennedy who was killed in action on the 23rd March 1918, aged 35. He had previously seen service in the Second Boer War in South Africa. His name does not appear on any memorial so far located in the Borough, but he is remembered in the book, and now CD '*Record of War Service London County Council Staff 1914 - 1918*'. He had worked at the 'Ewell Colony' (St Ebbas).

*From: Ken Kennedy
To: Hazel
Subject: Nice Re-write
Date: 10 Jan 2012*

Hi Haze

*Thanks for the fine job integrating the new material on Walter. I have pointed members of the family to your site which I believe covers what we know about Walter's family. Also, I have forwarded the Rozycki material to members of that family but have not heard back from them yet. This research has given me a chance to contact relatives connected through Matilda. Thanks again for your excellent work.
Ken Kennedy*

As part of the continual research on Epsom & Ewell War Memorials Hazel Ballan did a write up on Walter Kennedy based only on what she could decipher from his war records, marriage entry and son Kenneth's Epsom birth entry. Hazel could not find any birth or census info on him at all.

Hazel continues ... "However, I did manage to get in touch with Ken Kennedy, Walter's grandson, through Ancestry. He said that we had found out so much more than he knew, but he was able to fill in some gaps for around the time his grandmother left for USA etc. as well as supply us with this photograph of Walter, plus his medal and watch.



Sgt. Walter Kennedy

"When Ken learnt, from our first write-up, that Walter had a sister, Cecelia, he continued to search for more information and succeeded in not only finding new relatives but also the story behind Walter's birth. None of the family could find the "married" couple with their 3 children in the 1891 census but I managed to track them down, much to the delight of the Kennedy clan."

Great job Haze.

See the full story about Walter Kennedy online at:

<http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/WarMemorialsSurnamesK.html#KennedyW>

A journey through time: the ancient trackways linking settlements at Ewell, Epsom, Ashted and Leatherhead

By Brian Bouchard

In discussion of possible reasons for the curious double bend in Stane Street, it has been suggested that a settlement at what became Ewell (from the Saxon *aewell* – 'river source') was established by the Pre-Roman Iron Age: evidence suggests a native religious centre devoted to the worship of the Celtic gods of wood and water and a later ritual site. Stane Street crossed the district on its way to the Downs and, in particular, has been identified by excavation behind St Martin's Church, Epsom. That edifice stands on a chalk knoll from which a spring once issued and, because sweet water meant life, the place is likely to have become a sacred site in common with Ewell where votive offerings have been found.

This article is intended to explore local routes along other tracks which could pre-date Stane Street and still survive in short sections.

The *Register or Memorial of Ewell* in 1408 made it possible for Philip Shearman to draw up conjectural maps of Ewell as the Parish might have been about that date. West Street, as Gallows Lane, is shown connecting at the parish boundary with a way running north to south from Kingston towards Epsom. A deed from the time of Henry VII (1485 – 1507) mentions 'the royal road called Gallowstrete that leads from Ewell to Epysham'. C S Willis describes this part of the route, in reverse, as: - 'Windmill Lane, leading from the direction of Epsom Church to Half-mile Bush and on to Gibraltar'. It is now represented by the wide footpath ascending from Larby Place, alongside the Kiln Lane trading estates, to Fairview Road – where the latter meets the present A24 'Half Mile Bush' appears on the 1866 OS. [If any further information can be provided on the exact nature of that landmark, the writer would be interested to receive details.]

Presumably having passed north of St Martin of Tours church, the itinerary continues as Worple Road [*'Worple' means a bridle path, often one connecting villages, which in the present case ran through the town's common fields. It may have been 'the King's street which is between Ebbesham and estede [Ashtead] mentioned in a 13th century quitclaim relating to property in Epsom to be found in the cartulary of Chertsey abbey*]. Beyond the bend into Avenue Road, Epsom, is a long red-brick wall, listed Grade II (NGR: TQ2094860031), with imposing gate-piers, topped by ashlar capitals, flanking gates which once provided a back entry to Woodcote Grove.



Evidently the public 'worple' was diverted away from the mansion-house: previously it would have gone very close to the main entrance to reach Chalk Lane. The track continues as Woodcote End, passing (after a considerable length of 'clunch' – chalk block – wall), a gateway into the coach-house courtyard of Durdans. Further on, one reaches Upper Woodcote Green on the right, a piece of verge, containing a small pond, presumably once used to water passing animals, which has been registered as a Surrey common. The old lane proceeds, with The Grove behind a wall on the left, to Worlds End, a cul de sac (picture left courtesy Brian Bouchard).

The dead-end is closed by a fence around Woodcote Park with tumble-down gate-pillars that once provided access to that estate. Henry I granted the abbot of Chertsey Abbey leave to keep dogs on all his land inside the forest and outside, to catch foxes, hares, pheasants, and cats, and to inclose his park there and have all the deer he could catch, also to have all the wood he needed from the king's forests. Thus the hunting park came to be created in 1155 by enclosure of the south - western corner of the manor of Epsom and the deprivation of public use of ways across the land, including what had been Stane Street. Traces of the old Roman road were discovered by S E Winbolt on 30 May 1936 by the gate mentioned earlier.

A line may be extrapolated from the stopped-off way at Worlds End across Woodcote Park to an ancient gate in the parish boundary with Ashtead at the junction of Pleasure Pit Road with Wilmerhatch Lane [The latter itself representing a detour around the emparkment back to Woodcote Green]. The trackway (mentioned by the late Reginald White in *The Ancient Roads of Epsom and District* as 'the old pack horse road') had then extended through what became Ashtead Park past the Roman site on which St Giles church and the earlier manor house were built in the 12th century. Another remnant exists as Chalk Lane, petering out as a footpath to Crampshaw Lane.

In the 17th century the way continued beyond Ashtead's marling pit (in which the hospital now stands) to what became the turnpike road/A24 - 'the highe way to River Crosse hill' in 1638. Nearby had been the Saxon centre of Ashtead – the stede (great hall/homestead) on one side and the associated cemetery on the other. The road afterwards continued a descent to Leatherhead [Celtic Letorito meaning "grey ford" or Old English Leodridan, a public ford] on a crossing over the River Mole.

See the complete article with detailed maps and photographs at <http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/JourneyThroughTime.html>

An Accolade for the *Memories of the Fifties* displays

One of the features of 2011 was the series of five displays triggering *Memories of the Fifties*. All the 40 display boards covering Fashion, Childhood, Living, National Service and Entertainment, we collected together for a display at the Ebbisham Centre for three weeks from the 31st October to 18th November and then reassembled at Ewell library, Bourne Hall for the *Memories of the Fifties Open Day* on the 21st November. Our thanks to Pat Lucas for arranging this and the volunteers for putting up the 40 panels.

Almost immediately after the displays were set up in the Ebbisham Centre we received the following email.

From: Nikki Cowlard

Sent: 01 November 2011

Subject: Life in the 1950s display

Just to say congratulations on the EELFH Centre's display on life in the 1950s currently at the Ebbisham Centre. Your volunteers have obviously put in an enormous amount of effort researching and setting up the display panels, and it seemed to be getting a lot of well-deserved attention when I was there today. I will make

sure it is advertised at Wednesday's EEHAS meeting and I will highlight it on our website (and your open day at BH).

Congratulations again.

Best wishes

Many thanks to Nikki. There was also a 'Comments' book at the Ebbisham Centre which garnered some very flattering comments.

The *Open Day* on the 21st November was also very successful with over 100 people attending and a number of *Memories* collected for the website. In fact, 41 personal memories have now been listed on the website and can be seen at

<http://epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/EpsomEwell1950s.html>. The *Open Day* was also valuable for raising some much-needed funds for the History Centre, from both the tombola and donations for refreshments. We were also asked if the display will be shown again and were we planning to make them available as a booklet. Something for the committee to think about.



Finally, it should be added that all the displays looked excellent and very professional (thank you to Jeremy Harte, Bourne Hall Museum Curator, for funding the printing). All the volunteers who put in so much work in researching and producing the posters are to be congratulated and have set a standard to be admired, as public responses have demonstrated.

Another successful *Who Do You Think You Are?* day

Saturday, 22nd October 2011 saw the eighth *Who Do You Think You Are?* day at Ewell Library. Volunteers rallied round to assist visitors with their research and we especially thank East Surrey History Society members for joining and supporting us.

We estimate some 120 people came to see us with their varied questions and problems, and the library say that over 200 people visited the library during the day. Help was sought for enquiries covering a wide range of subjects and locations, including family research in Ireland, South Africa, Australia, Italy and Central Europe. There were even some for the UK and even Epsom & Ewell! Perhaps the strangest request I heard about was someone seeking the family history of a horse (or should that be equine history?)

These events demonstrate the interest in family history and seem to be very well received. A number of visitors asked when the next *WDYTUA?* day will be and requested we do them more frequently. This is something we should consider, especially since library visitors can now search *Ancestry*, *Find My Past* and *Times Digital Archive* websites on library computers.

Finally, it was a good day for contributions to our finances. The book sale raised around £100 and sale of Starter Kits and donations raised a further £55.

Well done all and a good discussion point for the next committee meeting.

A Visit to Wandsworth – the Museum

By Bert Barnhurst



In a rash moment of agreeing to represent East Surrey FHS at a Coffee Morning with Friends of Wandsworth Museum, I was pleasantly surprised by an entertaining and enjoyable visit at the Museum which is now housed at 38 West Hill, Wandsworth, SW18 1RZ. <http://www.wandsworthmuseum.co.uk/>

We would be envious of their coffee shop facilities, as Jeremy would be of the facilities available to the Museum. They are currently exhibiting many artefacts relating to Wandsworth Prison – previously known as Surrey County Prison.

Fortunately I was let out after time off for good behaviour!

Sheila Allen, Chairman of the Friends of Wandsworth Museum explained that they had been somewhat nomadic for some time after being 'evicted' from their previous home in Garrett Lane. The building they now occupy was previously the main library in Wandsworth and has now been given to them free of charge by the Council for a few years until they become established. As they have only been in this current building a short time, their archive material is not all available yet, but they are keen to get this up and running soon. The Friends are a very active organisation, keen to re-establish themselves, judging by the variety of other organizations invited. The Chairman said that they were keen to make contacts with similar organizations hoping that this would be of mutual benefit and was delighted that representatives from "as far away as Epsom" had been kind enough to come.

Whilst they were announcing their programme of events, I took the opportunity of promoting our organization and our *1950s Memories Open Day*; coincidentally, two of the other invitees said they knew of Bourne Hall and I hope they came on November 21.

What are you looking at, and what do you see?

Another picture puzzle from Bert Barnhurst



This photo came from a lady at an East Surrey Family History Society meeting. She stated that the photo included her grandfather and was taken when the Regiment was at Tadworth. So what can you see - look very carefully?

- Is that a lady I see in the front row? Who is she likely to be?
- What do you think of her uniform, and did women wear such things in WW1?
- When may the photo have been taken?

Further Clues?

It has to be a lady; her uniform is wrong, it looks like one of the Sergeant Major's who is on the right. She is wearing puttees because her trousers are too short and are being held up by a belt. Is she just trying to look like 'one of the boys'?

- Is she the Sergeant Major's girl friend, or wife or what?
- Was the photograph taken after a 'camp' party?
- Were Sergeant Majors allowed to wear monocles?

It is likely the photograph was taken in 1917/18, as it is known that the grandfather was called up and conscription did not come in until 1916.

Also there are no signs of any medals, not even on the Sergeant Major's uniform, and campaign medals were not usually issued until after the end of the war.

So what did you see? As the old saying goes - None the wiser but better informed. Any further thoughts please send them on a postcard to the editor.

Two New Website Fundraising Initiatives

We are delighted to announce that we now have two new initiatives for raising funds for the History Centre. The Library Service is very generous in providing space for us in Ewell library, but we receive no other direct funds to provide equipment (such as computers, printers and projectors) and materials (such as chemical-free sleeves, printing for possible booklets etc.) to ensure we can continue to provide a free, efficient and welcome service to the community.

If you visit the website <http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/> you will see that we have signed up for both PayPal and EasyFundraising. Both of these donation opportunities have come up because of our much appreciated and substantial website, especially with regard to family history records.

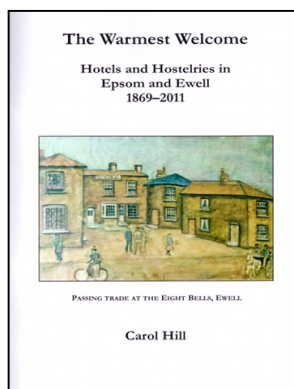
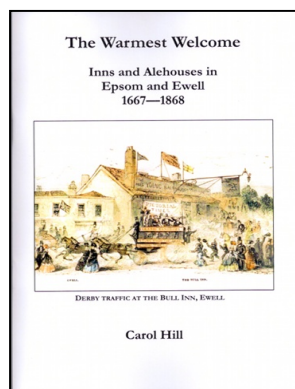
PayPal PayPal allows people who use our website to expand their research to show their appreciation by voluntarily making a small donation (or maybe even a big one). Since the web is global we have made it easy for people to donate in a variety of currencies. We have also added a signature comment about donating to 'Lucy' our email address.

Easyfundraising means that you can raise money whenever you shop online. It's **easyfundraising** very simple - just visit <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/eelfhc/> to register .org.uk and shop with over 2,000 well known retailers like Amazon, Argos, M&S, eBay and many more. Whenever you buy something, the retailer makes a donation to Epsom & Ewell Local & Family History Centre. They've helped other causes raise over £2,000,000 so it really does work.

Thank you to Bourne Hall Museum

By the way, we had to have some proof of our credibility and not-for-profit status to apply to PayPal. Our good friend Jeremy Harte, Curator of Bourne Hall Museum, stepped forward and sent a very flattering letter on our behalf. We thought you might like to see it so turn to the end of the newsletter and enjoy. Many thanks Jeremy.

"The Warmest Welcome - Part 2" now published



March 2010 saw the publication of part one of 'The Warmest Welcome'. Carol Hill's story of the *Inns and Alehouses in Epsom and Ewell from 1667 to 1868*. At the time Carol committed to publishing part two featuring *Hotels and Hostelries in Epsom and Ewell from 1869 to 2011*. Both publications are now available at £4.95 each, available from Bourne Hall Museum Bookshop.

They are a fascinating read and we would like to thank Carol and all those who assisted her with research and writing especially Jeremy Harte for helping with their production and printing.

Where else in the World are Epsom and Ewell?

From Hazel Ballan

In the last newsletter there was a list of places called Epsom around the world. They included:

- Two in the USA, in New Hampshire and Indiana
- Two in Australia, in Victoria and Queensland
- One in New Zealand, close to Auckland

It was also stated that no other places called Ewell had been found.

Google Earth had been the source of the earlier search. However, a quick search on Ancestry.com came up with the following extra Epsoms:

- Epsom, Saint Mary, Jamaica
- Epsom, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Plus two Ewells:

- Ewell, Somerset, Maryland, USA
- Ewell, Dale, Alabama, USA

But strangely an Ewell in Kent but no Ewell in Surrey, England

Where to find the General Register Office Indexes

From Joanna Grant and Bert Barnhurst

As you are aware, the General Register Office for England and Wales (GRO) provides free public access to the index of events for birth, marriage, death, civil partnership, adoption and overseas records.

Since 28 October last year the full set of the indexes has no longer been available at the LMA (London Metropolitan Archives)

However, from 14th November 2011 there has been free public access elsewhere to provide greater geographic coverage:

- The British Library
- City of Westminster Archives Centre
- Birmingham Central Library
- Bridgend Local and Family History Centre
- Manchester City Library
- Newcastle City Library
- Plymouth Central Library

The indices are on a microfiche format and include more recent events than some on line sites. Bert recently checked and Westminster had up to September 2011 but marriages were only up to March 2009 for some unknown reason.

Further details on the records available can be found on the Directgov website

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/Registeringlifeevents/Familyhistoryandresearch/DG_175464

Please note that while other locations do have partial lists you should check. This site says that Croydon has up to 1997 but Surrey History Centre only has up to 1930!

New Additions to the Website

Since the last newsletter in September 2011, webmaster Peter Reed, has added a wealth of new information and pages to the website covering some 36 different subjects including a murder mystery, personal memories of the 1950s, Epsom Rate Book 1900, St Martin's Church Epsom graveyard and burials map and numerous family histories. In addition, some five subjects were revised and added to.

Rather than list these new pages here, it is probably easier to look at the 'What's New' page at

<http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/WhatsNew.html>

New Records available

St Martin's Epsom Marriages – 1695 to 1899

2000+ St Martins Marriages (from 25 May 1695 to 22 Mar 1899) are now on line at

<http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/StMartinsMarriages.shtml>

This new transcription is the result of long and hard work by a number of volunteers, who had to struggle with incomplete records, poor microfilm copies and terrible handwriting. As part of the proofreading exercise, the new transcript has been checked, where possible, against the Surrey Marriage Index and discrepancies noted.

Although the new transcript included the names of witnesses, where recorded, these have not had the same in-depth proofreading as the usual Bride and Groom details due to lack of resources.

Here are a couple of interesting items from the records:

- *On 7th March 1843 William Cooper married Catherine Miller. Nothing strange there but they had 9, yes NINE, witnesses. Were they worried that the marriage might have been contested?*
- *The marriage of Charles Whiting Esq. and Louisa Swaine on 27th September 1821 has the unusual comment "With the consent of the Lord High Chancellor".*

Webmaster Peter has asked if a volunteer would like to research this latter item a bit more since it may lead to an interesting insight into local history.

Crime in Tudor and Stuart Epsom and Ewell

Details of Assize Indictments in Epsom and Ewell during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I are now available on line at

<http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/CrimeTudorStuart.html>.

They cover crimes between 1564 and 1625 and were transcribed thanks to Bourne Hall Museum. Jeremy would especially wish to thank Kamaljit Nandra and Eric Hill for their help in transcribing these records. Go on, have a look, they make fascinating reading.

Assizes were held twice a year, at the vacations in Lent (February/ March) and Trinity (June/ July), with a winter sitting sometimes held in December. During the early years, judges sat at Southwark, Kingston and Croydon, although other Surrey towns began to host assizes later in the seventeenth century. The arrival of the judges was made as grand and ceremonial as possible; they were representatives of the highest authority in the state, with the power of life and death.

A grand jury investigated alleged crimes and issued a presentment as to whether they should go to trial. A grand jury consisted of 24 lesser gentlemen, the qualification being 'lands and revenues to the value of a hundred shillings'. Serving as a grand juror was a good way to make contacts and increase knowledge of the law; Edward Skeete of Ewell served on six between 1619 and 1624, perhaps as part of a campaign to build up the family fortunes and reputation, since the Skeetes had moved to Ewell from Leatherhead after a series of ruinous cases brought against them in Star Chamber.



Go on, have a look at the indictments, they make fascinating reading. Here's a couple to tempt you:

- *Assizes of December 1564: Worsley, Eden, of Ewell, spinster, indicted for murder by witchcraft. On 4 July 1564 at Ewell she bewitched to death Elizabeth Bybye, daughter of Robert Bybye. Tried at the next assizes and found guilty; to hang.*
- *Assizes of July 1609: Porte, Peter, of Ewell, labourer, indicted for petty larceny. On 26 June 1608 at Dorking he stole a piece of boxwood (10d) from Ambrose Browne, esq. Confessed; whipped.*

WW1 Surrey Recruitment Registers

Did your ancestors join the services in Surrey 1908 - 1933? Transcripts of the WW1 Surrey Recruitment Registers comprise details of about 85,000 men who signed up for service with a variety of regiments in Surrey between 1908 and 1933.

The transcripts are available to search on-line on Find My Past.co.uk which can be accessed free of charge in all Surrey Libraries and at Surrey History Centre.

<http://www.findmypast.co.uk/search/military/indexes/surrey-registers>.

Surrey Tithe Records Project completed

Tithe maps and apportionment schedules produced under the Tithe Act of 1836 are a unique national resource, possibly only surpassed in value by the Domesday Book. For almost every parish in the country, they provide accurate data on the geography, ownership, occupation, use and economic productivity of the land. Researchers of local and regional history, archaeology, economic history and genealogy will all find them invaluable.

Very high resolution, coloured digital images of the county's tithe maps have been created, funded by the Surrey Wildlife Trust, the Surrey Archaeological Society, the Surrey History Trust and Surrey Heritage; and volunteers have transcribed the tithe apportionments for each tithe district, which tell you who owned and occupied every plot of land on the map and what that land was used for in the mid-19th century.

All the material on the discs can also be freely viewed in the search room at Surrey History Centre, thus protecting the originals and making their content more readily available.

One for 'The Guinness Book of Baptisms'?

From Bert Barnhurst

Whilst researching at LMA, I chanced upon the following baptism for a George Brown:
Born 23 February 1829 Baptised 5 May 1889 (age 60)

It stated that both parents were deceased – I think he left it a bit late. Was he worrying about the hereafter and I wonder if the Vicar had a hard time holding George over the font?

Epsom & Ewell Local History Centre

Haven't we done well

You might like to know something of the work the 27 'active volunteers' have been undertaking in 2011 – *if your name does not appear in the desk diary in the office at least once a month with your voluntary hours worked either at the LHC and/or at home then you are not counted in the active total.*

Total hours given to the LHC by Volunteers : 6,495.45 hours

Total number of personal visits to the LHC by Enquirers: 819

Total number of enquiries by letter, phone, email and Enquiries Direct 51

Total number of enquiries handled by volunteers 870

* *Includes manning the LHC, preparing displays, researching and dealing with enquiries, managing and adding to the website, updating Census and BMD records and digitising the photo library.*

** *Equivalent to 812 8-hour days.*

The hours are down a marginal 5% compared to last year (*maybe influenced by Hazel being away for four months in Australia?? - Ed*).

However we seem to have handled significantly more visitors up from 567 last year to 819 this year. This was probably boosted by the *Memories of the Fifties* events and the successful *WDYTUA? Day*. All in all, we handled nearly 250 more enquiries than last year, and that's not counting the numbers who visit the website.

Well done everyone; a significant contribution from our unpaid volunteers.

Change to Opening Hours

The library has informed us that because of Bourne Hall's problems with their heating the library will be closing at 5.00pm on Tuesdays until further notice because it is too cold. This means that the Tuesday evening session of the History Centre will not be open either.

This cuts down the official opening times to:

Tuesday: 10.00am to 12.00 noon

Thursday and Friday: 2.00pm to 4.00pm

Have You Got News for Me?

We hope you've enjoyed reading this newsletter. Thanks to all those who provided information, anecdotes stories and pictures – Hazel, Bert, Brian, Joanna, Clive, Margaret, Peter and Jeremy.

But to keep the momentum going we need more, so I make no apologies in repeating this message, as it seems to encourage more people to contribute material.

I'm sure many more of you have experiences, contacts with enquirers or local or family history information that would interest us all, so let's have them - you can see from this current issue, we like gossip and comments as much as more serious subjects.

So, please don't be shy. If you have any

- reports on visits to various sites or centres
- interesting facts about local history or genealogy
- intriguing Information Requests
- new research documents the LFHC has received
- forthcoming projects or events
- or just strange tales to tell

please let Ian know - supporting photographs and pictures, if available, would be most welcome. It will help make the newsletter more interesting for us all.

The next publication date will be in May 2012, so you have plenty of time to think of something.

IRP January 2012

Bourne Hall Museum Spring Street Ewell Surrey KT17 1UF Ian Parker Local History Centre Bourne Hall Spring Street Ewell Surrey KT17 1UF 25th November 2011 Dear Ian, I heard that you would like me to write a few words about the status of Epsom & Ewell Family and Local History Centre. That's a pleasure. When I look back on the achievements you've made in this field and the projects on which we have co-operated, I am astonished to think how much you've done with how little. The Centre is a purely voluntary body, bringing together a great many people (upwards of 30, to my knowledge) who study, publicise and provide information on the history of the Borough of Epsom & Ewell, as well as helping family historians with more general services. A small room off the library at Bourne Hall has been made available at the discretion of Surrey County Council, which means that the Centre, along with the library and my museum, have the advantage of working in a single building. The usual days of operation are Tuesdays and Thursdays, with about 5 people being present for each of those days; but when I consider the other days on which I've met volunteers here, along with the special events and outside exhibitions – not to mention the considerable work of transcription, indexing, and design of displays done by people working at home – then the number of hours collectively worked each year must be very high, perhaps 7000 in total over the last year. This is an impressive figure, all the more so because it has been achieved without any external funding. Neither Surrey County Council (the managers of the library) nor Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (my own parent organisation) have ever subsidised the finances of the Society – our involvement being limited to giving access to storage areas, display space, and the use of our own archives of local history. The funding of the Centre has come from the volunteers themselves; they've received donations, printed gift cards, organised booksales and come up with other moneymaking drives. Of course every penny raised has gone straight into the running of the Centre.	The value which the public receives from the Centre is immense. On most occasions that I call in on the work desk, there will be two or three people sitting talking about their family story or places that they used to know. It's services like this which provide the social glue that holds a community together. The advice and information offered by the Centre, which can draw on years of expertise, always comes free. I have no doubt that with a better level of financial support, the Centre would be able to add much more to the services which it supplies. There are three areas where this would be particularly relevant. Firstly, the Centre has a justified reputation for excellence in its online services. The website, http://www.epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/, must be one of the largest local history archives online in proportion to the area covered. There were, when I last checked, 301 pages covering everything from local heritage trails through carefully researched biographies and building histories to whole archives of demographic information – parish registers, graveyard transcripts and so on. But excellence brings its own demands. Apart from the issue of hosting, which must soon raise its head at the present state of growth, there is an increasing demand for educational materials which can be used by schools and colleges, and this is a specialist area which would benefit from paid expertise. The second area in which financial issues are beginning to bite is that of archiving. The Centre is assuming responsibility for the very impressive collection of local archives built up since 1959 by librarians at Ewell – things like photographs, ephemera, old maps, small published leaflets and so on. But these things need to be cared for. Archival materials, such as inert plastic sleeves and acid-free packing materials, are not cheap. Furthermore, a growing proportion of archives are now virtual; many of the photographs made available for copying now exist only in digital form. It is essential to update the Centre's IT provision and to have adequate provision for back-ups. And last, there is the whole field of outreach. Anyone who has been to one of the open days run by the Centre will testify to the buzz of excitement as people arrive, see the exhibitions, talk to others about their memories and sit down to view the 1950s local newsreel or nibble on the wartime catering. But these things cannot be provided without some kind of budget, even Spam costs money. Professional printing and effective multimedia would make a huge difference to the quality of these events and increase the value of the Centre to the community. These are a few of the areas where I feel that the Centre would benefit from some outside investment to complement the huge amount of free work which is being done at present by the team of volunteers. Meanwhile you can rest assured that whatever shape this takes, you can count on my continued co-operation in bringing the history of Epsom & Ewell to a wider audience. Jeremy Harte Curator
--	--